

CITY OF BELMONT

PLANNING COMMISSION

ACTION MINUTES

TUESDAY, MARCH 4, 2008, 7:00 PM

Chair Parsons called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. at One Twin Pines Lane, City Hall Council Chambers.

1. ROLL CALL

Commissioners Present: Parsons, Frautschi, Horton, McKenzie
Commissioners Absent: Mayer, Mercer

Staff Present: Community Development Director de Melo (CDD), Assistant Planner Walker (AP), Associate Planner Gill (AP), City Attorney Zafferano (CA), Recording Secretary Flores (RS)

2. AGENDA AMENDMENTS – None

3. COMMUNITY FORUM (Public Comments) - None

4. CONSENT CALENDAR

RS Flores noted that she had been given several grammar corrections to both sets of Minutes, and that she will make the corrections.

4A. Minutes of January 15, 2008

MOTION: By Vice Chair Frautschi, seconded by Commissioner Horton to approve the Minutes of January 15, 2008 with the indicated corrections.

Ayes: Frautschi, Horton, McKenzie, Parsons
Noes: None
Absent: Mayer, Mercer

Motion passed 4/0/2

4B. Minutes of February 7, 2008

MOTION: By Vice Chair Frautschi, seconded by Commissioner McKenzie, to approve the Minutes of February 7, 2008 with the indicated corrections.

Ayes: Frautschi, McKenzie, Horton, Parsons
Noes: None
Absent: Mayer, Mercer

Motion passed 4/0/2

5. OLD BUSINESS

5A. 2445 CORONET BOULEVARD – Landscape Plan

AP Gill summarized the staff memorandum, concurring with the revised landscape plan and recommending approval.

Tony Garvonali, applicant, stated that he is willing to take any recommendations from the Commission.

Vice Chair Frautschi thanked the applicant for providing the additional plant material and reducing the hardscape.

MOTION: By Vice Chair Frautschi, seconded by Commissioner Horton, to adopt the Resolution approving a Final Landscape Plan for 2445 Coronet Boulevard (Appl. No. 2007-0037).

Ayes: Frautschi, Horton, McKenzie, Parsons

Noes: None

Absent: Mayer, Mercer

Motion passed 4/0/2

Chair Parsons noted that his item is appealable to the City Council within 10 calendar days.

5B. 1212 NORTH ROAD – Landscape Plan

CDD de Melo summarized the staff memorandum, recommending approval subject to the added conditions. Questions from Commissioners were referred to the applicant.

Jay Singh, property owner, responded to Commissioner's questions as follows:

- A tree was removed but he believed it was less than 10".
- They usually put seasonal flowers in the area between the two concrete retaining walls.
- The area in the back will be lawn.
- They are in the process of testing the color of the walls.
- He understands that the neighbor above him had been asked to divert his water onto the street (on Winding Way) so that the drainpipe will be removed.
- The shrubs in front of the house are still there and will not be removed. They may decrease the size of the shrubs and will clean it up.
- The shotcrete and the paint on the walls will match the color of the soil.
- They are not increasing the size of their lawn from what they had, and would prefer to keep it as is.
- He would not be opposed to planting one tree somewhere in the front yard but does not want to block the view from where he sits or from his patio in the side yard. The 5-6' hedge in his side yard will remain. They are doing their best to blend the walls in phases into the landscape so it does not stand out.

Commissioner Horton commented that this is an emergency fix to a hillside that should not have been, adding that it is a frightening view of a concrete hill from the right-of-way. She believed that the bulk needs to be mitigated in some way, and recommended that they plant some trees in the side yard on the right, which would not hurt anyone's view but would help the people who are looking at this hillside from the street.

Commissioner McKenzie concurred.

Vice Chair Frautschi concurred, adding that they should put as many Redwood or other trees that will grow to at least 30' on the downhill side yard, and that the shrubs in front need to be reworked with more plant material. He further suggested that the driveway, which appears to be much wider than is necessary, would provide an opportunity to add landscape on the left side, to soften it.

CDD de Melo suggested that they continue this item for a final look at the side yard plantings and the existing driveway.

Regarding the planting areas on either side of the main entry walk, Vice Chair Frautschi stated that they need the names of existing shrubs on the Landscape Plan so they know exactly what is there. He felt there were a lot more circles drawn on the plan than there are plants.

Vice Chair Frautschi stated that he would like to know the exact understanding between Mr. Singh and his neighbor regarding the pipe that is hanging on the retaining wall. CA Zafferano responded that there seems to be the possibility of litigation between the Singhs and their neighbors, and the City is not now privy to

what, if anything, is a result of that litigation. It is possible that the litigation may not be resolved by the time this item returns to the Commission so that there may not be a definitive answer to what is going to happen to that particular pipe until those private disputes between the neighbors are resolved. Vice Chair Frautschi stated that they would then need to add a Condition of Approval that something will be done about it if the situation that currently exists in any way damages the Landscape Plan they eventually approve.

Commissioner McKenzie agreed that using part of the driveway for planting would also soften the look and the bulk of the whole property, and added that in the final Plan he would like to see the final color selected for the concrete in the back.

Chair Parsons concurred with all previous comments, adding that the left side of the driveway would be a logical place for a tree that would screen the hillside with the concrete wall, and the same thing could be said about the other side of the house where a clump of trees would add some height. The plant materials that were selected for the back are not going to screen much of the wall, so that some larger plant materials could be used there. He encouraged the applicant to be sensitive to their neighbors since the eyesore on the hill affects the property values and life style of the people living in the neighborhood. He added that the plant materials that exist in front of the house are clinging to life, are not very good looking and need to be replaced, and suggested that the applicant take advantage of his landscape architect to choose additional plant materials that would make the house look more attractive.

CDD de Melo asked for the Commission's thoughts on the perimeter chain link fencing. Vice Chair Frautschi suggested that they could have the chain link spray painted a forest green or black and they probably would not have to do the wood slats. Chair Parsons said he would not want to do it in green but in an earth tone that blends. He felt that slats would just draw more attention to the hillside.

MOTION: By Vice Chair Frautschi seconded by Commissioner McKenzie, to continue the Final Landscape Plan for 1212 North Road (Appl. No. 2007-0067), with the modifications that have been indicated to staff, to be returned to the Commission at a date uncertain.

Ayes: Frautschi, McKenzie, Horton, Parsons

Noes: None

Absent: Mayer, Mercer

Motion passed 4/0/2

6. PUBLIC HEARINGS:

6A. PUBLIC HEARING – 1519 RALSTON AVENUE

To consider a Single-Family Design Review for a 497 square-foot addition to the existing 2,489 square-foot single-family residence for a total of 2,986 square feet that is below the maximum permitted 4,500 square feet for this site (Appl. No. 2008-0005)

APN: 045-101-050; Zoned: R-1H (Single Family Residential)

CEQA Status: Recommended Categorical Exemption per Section 15301

Applicant: JoAnn Gann, Architect

Owner(s): John and Patricia Branscum

Project Planner: Jennifer Walker (650) 595-7453

AP Walker summarized the staff memorandum, recommending approval.

Responding to Vice Chair Frautschi's question, John Branscum, property owner, was not aware of the Public Hearing Notice that should have been posted on his property. He was referred to staff for clarification.

Chair Parsons opened the Public Hearing. No one came forward to speak.

MOTION: By Vice Chair Frautschi, seconded by Commissioner Horton, to close the Public Hearing. Motion passed 4/0 by a show of hands.

Commissioner McKenzie asked if any new landscaping is planned adjacent to the new addition. AP Walker responded that there is a patio area located centrally behind the house, adjacent to the extension. The site plan does not indicate any new landscaping around the addition but that they are keeping all of the existing landscaping except what would be removed because of direct conflict with the addition.

Chair Parsons suggested that it would be appropriate to have a condition that they bring back a Landscape Plan documenting existing plant materials so they know what is there in case of any damage during construction and would show what will happen in and around the new addition.

Vice Chair Frautschi had no problem with the project, except that he did not like the existing garage doors.

Commissioner Horton disclosed that she is acquainted with the applicant but does not live within 500' of the property. She had no issues with the project.

MOTION: By Commissioner McKenzie, seconded by Vice Chair Frautschi, to adopt the Resolution approving a Single-Family Design Review for 1519 Ralston Avenue (Appl. No. 2008-0005), with the attached conditions and an additional condition that a Landscape rendition be returned to the Commission of what is presently in the back yard and indicating any proposed changes.

Ayes: McKenzie, Frautschi, Horton, Parsons

Noes: None

Absent: Mayer, Mercer

Motion passed 4/0/1

Chair Parsons noted that this item may be appealed to the City Council within 10 calendar days.

7. REPORTS, STUDIES AND UPDATES

7A. 500 Block – El Camino Real (East Side)

CA Zafferano reported that the Police Department has completed its investigation of the incident of the cutting down of a number of trees along the El Camino. As a result of that investigation, staff has determined that they will recommend proceeding along civil enforcement lines.

7B. Motel 6 – 1101 Shoreway Road

CDD de Melo reported that the security issues are trending downwards.

7C. NDNU (Koret) Athletic Field

No report.

7D. Mid-Peninsula Water District - Folger Drive

CDD de Melo has scheduled a meeting with MPWD representatives for the following Friday to go over Planning Commission comments from the October meeting for improvement of the plans. Hopefully they can be turned around quickly and returned to one of the next meetings.

Additional Items

CDD de Melo commented that Item 6A on the agenda reached the Commission in just 23 days after submittal. He wanted to underscore that when they receive projects that are clean and easy to look at they try to get them to the Commission in a timely manner.

Commissioner McKenzie reminded staff that the Commission had asked that the Ralston/101 Interchange landscaping issue be put on the agenda. CDD de Melo responded that he had thought it might be better served to bring that report back when all 6 or 7 Commissioners are present. It will be on the agenda for the next meeting.

CDD de Melo responded to questions from Vice Chair Frautschi as follows:

- Motel 6 could be pulled off the agenda, but he would probably be asked to put it back on at a later date. The next substantive report is not due until June.
- It has been awhile since the Charles Armstrong School landscaping has been completed. It will require a staff inspection and he will add it to a future agenda.
- Regarding the addition of trees at Avante Pizza, he will put it back on the agenda.

8. CITY COUNCIL MEETING OF TUESDAY, MARCH 11, 2008

Liaison: Chair Parsons

Alternate Liaison: Commissioner Mayer

9. ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting was adjourned at 7:50 p.m. to a Regular Planning Commission Meeting on Tuesday, March 19, 2008 at 7:00 p.m. in Belmont City Hall.

Carlos de Melo
Planning Commission Secretary

CD's of Planning Commission Meetings are available in the
Community Development Department.

Please call (650) 595-7416 to schedule an appointment.